

CPYRGHT

Behind JFK's Speech To the Hired Invaders

By DANIEL MASON

BEHIND ALL THE sentimental hoopla on TV and in the press about the "brave" men who had been succored from Cuban prisons with "ransom" money contributed by generous Americans is the stark fact that the Kennedy administration had to do something for these mercenary troops.

After all, it was the CIA, the Pentagon and the State Department who recruited these fellows from among Batista henchmen, scions of the wealthy exploiters of the Cuban people and malcontents.

These Washington agencies trained them, paid them and directed them on that Cuban invasion fiasco in April, 1961.

NEXT TIME

The Kennedy Administration had to come to the aid of these mercenary troops, or find itself confronted with the possibility of never being able to recruit similar forces for subversive purposes in other countries — or in Cuba itself — in the future. This is a principle that is followed even by gang chiefs, who have to take care of their gunmen, provide bail, hire lawyers, "spring" them from prison.

Attorney General Robert Kennedy admitted as much at a secret meeting with some pharmaceutical manufacturers early in December, when he was trying to win their "help" for the prisoner exchange.

One of the participants in the parley reports the President's brother as confessing that it had been the U.S. government that had sent invaders to Cuba. Robert Kennedy was quoted as admitting that "my brother made a mistake," and that "they are our responsibility."

PHOTOGENIC?

One would expect that the Kennedy administration would have learned something from its self-admitted "mistake." Instead, the President ill-advisedly has himself photographed with some of these ex-prisoners, who are considered by the Cuban people as traitors.

To compound this affront to American traditions, Kennedy also reviewed these mercenaries at the Orange Bowl in Miami last Saturday, while they screamed boldly — from the safety of the Florida stadium — about returning to conquer Cuba.

These 1100 mercenaries are lucky to be alive and free today. Just imagine what would have happened to them if they had been caught by the murderous dictatorship of South Korea, which is paid by Washington, or the "anti-guerrilla" U.S. troops in South Vietnam, or the bloody Franco, or a long list of these "friends" of Washington?

"RANSOM" HOAX

The attempt to make it appear that the prisoners were being saved by payment of "ransom" isn't fooling anybody. Since when has a prisoner exchange become "ransom?" Should the Cuban people be blamed if they did not provide prisoners to the U.S. for exchange purposes because of their refusal to invade the U.S.?

And what is it that the Cuban government asked in exchange for the invasion prisoners? Only medical supplies and food and milk for children and babies.

The Kennedy administration, the press and television should be ashamed of trying to make this appear to be "ransom."

It's disgraceful that Washington's policies of economic boycott and intimidation have deprived Cuban children and babies of the necessities of life so that the Castro government has to make such deals for them.

Now that the prisoner exchange has been completed, it has become clear that there was never any real support among the American people for getting these mercenaries out of Cuban prisons, despite all the propaganda efforts for months to get that kind of backing.

KENNEDY PROJECT

The prisoner exchange was a direct Washington project, carried out at the very top level by Attorney General Kennedy himself. Assisting him were Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach, Assistant Attorney General Louis F. Oberdorfer, Robert A. Hirsch of the State Department,

and Mitchell Rogovin, of the Internal Revenue Service. In addition, there were at least 25 lower-ranking government officials assigned to the operation.

Also involved were a group of corporation lawyers and the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company and the Bank of America.

As usual in all such affairs, the big corporations got their cut. The drug and dairy monopolies were finally "recruited" to provide the substance for the prisoner exchange. And they squeezed until they got the most profit out of their so-called donations.

The scheme for this involved tax deductions. In the first place, the "donations" were ruled tax exempt, which meant that at the normal corporation rate of 32 percent, the manufacturer would save \$520 for every \$1,000 in drugs food or milk "contributed."

But this was only the beginning. The monopolies were permitted to charge for these at their selling price, not at what they cost to produce. This means that in most cases what was figured at \$1,000 in the accounting process really cost the monopoly \$100 or so, since in the drug business there is a tremendous markup on all commodities.

The final irony is the way the press and television tried to make Attorney General Kennedy and Gen. Lucius Clay appear as great heroes because they had scraped together almost \$3 millions the last minute to "save" the prisoner exchange.

What was not told was that this \$3 millions was supposed to have been paid to the Cuban government last April, when the Castro government had released and returned to the U.S. 60 of the more critically ill prisoners. Was it any wonder that the Cuban government wanted this paid as a sign of "good faith" by Washington?